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RUEHLZ RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHAH #1243 3201222  
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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9708  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 2982  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0800  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0674  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1253  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1900

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001243

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: MARY PASTOR DENIED EXIT

11. (SBU) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) The pastor of a small evangelical congregation in Mary province, Ilmurad Nurlyyev, told poloff November 16 that the Turkmenistan government prevented him from exiting the country. Nurlyyev, who heads a Turkmen Baptist Church called "Light to the World" and attended a meeting with a visiting USCIRF delegation in August, said he was escorted off a plane bound for Minsk on November 11 and told that he did not have permission to leave the country. The plane departed with Nurlyyev's luggage on board. He had intended to attend a month-long teaching tour and conference in Kiev organized by the Ukrainian Free Churches Union of Evangelical Christians.

13. (SBU) Following this incident, Nurlyyev went to the Migration Service to find out why he was taken off the plane. They confirmed that he was not allowed to travel, but said that it was due to a decision taken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). MVD, however, told Nurlyyev that the Migration Service was responsible for not letting him fly. Nurlyyev planned to write to authorities for information regarding why he was not able to travel to Kiev and to find out if his family is under a similar restriction. Nurlyyev asked for Embassy assistance with his case.

14. (SBU) COMMENT: We do not know why Nurlyyev was pulled off the plane and do not know if his religious activities are a factor. Officials have told the Embassy that there is no official list of those not permitted to travel abroad. Embassy will try to get an official explanation of what happened to Nurlyyev.  
HOAGLAND